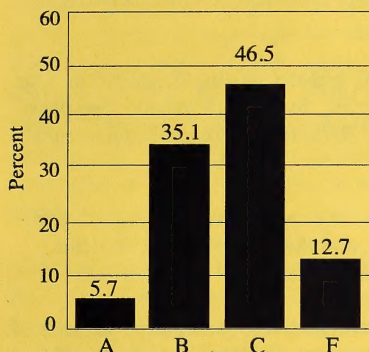


English 33

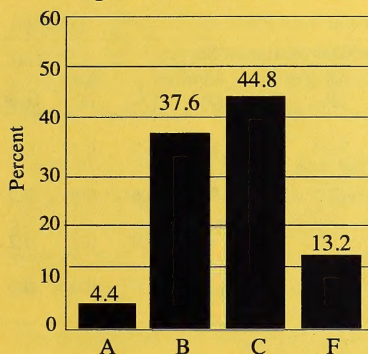
Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for January 1995

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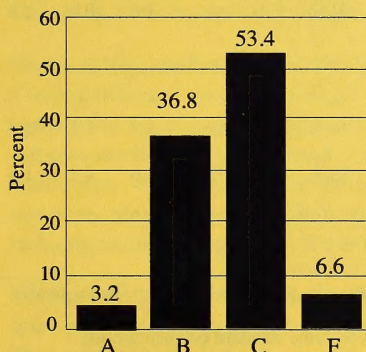
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the public with an overview of results from the January 1995 administration of the English 33 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been mailed to schools and school jurisdiction offices. An annual provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, June, and August results is published each year.

Description of the Examination

The English 33 Diploma Examination consists of two parts: a written-response section and a reading section. Each section is worth 50% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 5 179 students who wrote the January 1995 examination.

- 93.4% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 3.2% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Generally, student achievement in relation to standards in English 33 was satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving the acceptable standard was slightly higher than the proportions in January 1994 and June 1994. The proportion of students achieving the standard of excellence was lower than it was in January 1994 but slightly higher than it was in June 1994.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 61.2%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 61.9%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 62.0%

Part A: Written Response

In responding to Part A, students are required to complete three writing assignments, each of which assesses a variety of writing and thinking skills.

In January 1995, the scoring category formerly used to mark Section III was expanded into two categories, named *Thought and Detail* and *Writing Skills*. These new scoring categories can be found on pages 24 and 25 of the bulletin. Also in January 1995, the two-marker system was adopted for marking Part A, which means that it is now possible for students to be awarded marks that are midway between scoring criteria. (See the following table.)

Readers will find the results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors. The most useful starting place for reviewing the results is at the **(3) Satisfactory** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%. The scoring criteria are provided in the *English 33 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examinations Program*, for the 1994–95 school year, which is available in all high schools.

The table below outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark (parts A and B combined), and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels. The average raw score for Part A was 30.2 out of 50.

By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent (5)	(4.5)	Proficient (4)	(3.5)	Satisfactory (3)	(2.5)	Limited (2)	(1.5)	Poor (1)	Ins*
Personal Response to Literature The student is required to read a piece of literature and to write a response from a personal perspective.	Thought and Detail	10.0	1.2	1.8	13.3	18.5	39.9	15.6	8.2	0.9	0.5	0.2
	Organization	5.0	1.0	1.5	10.9	18.0	42.2	16.0	9.1	0.6	0.5	0.2
	Matters of Choice	5.0	1.1	1.7	11.4	17.4	47.0	12.5	7.5	0.9	0.3	0.2
	Matters of Correctness	5.0	1.2	2.2	12.3	17.2	36.5	15.5	12.5	1.6	0.9	0.2
Functional Writing The student is required to write a response to a particular situation (e.g., a business letter or application).	Thought and Detail	10.0	1.0	2.5	14.1	16.7	37.7	16.8	9.8	0.8	0.2	0.3
	Writing Skills	5.0	0.8	1.5	10.6	16.5	41.6	15.5	11.2	1.6	0.4	0.3
Response to Visual Communication The assignment asks the student to respond to a photograph. The student is required to write about main ideas in relation to techniques of visual communication.	Thought and Detail	5.0	0.8	1.1	8.1	11.6	30.4	22.3	19.6	3.5	1.2	1.4
	Writing Skills	5.0	0.6	1.0	8.2	12.0	39.4	18.2	15.3	2.6	1.2	1.4

*Ins (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off-topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded the acceptable standard on each scoring category.

Section I: Personal Response to Literature

The excerpt from Isak Dinesen's *The Sailor-Boy's Tale* evoked many interesting student responses. Most students argued that "everyone needs help somewhere along the way." They developed such ideas as "Help shows compassion which is what makes us human," "Man cannot survive in this world by doing everything for himself," and "Memory and identification with others cause people to recognize the need for help." Several students related the human need for assistance to the helplessness of young children. Some students commented on the harmful consequences we would suffer if we failed to help those in need—"it would be a very lonely world full of selfish, self-centered people." Frequently students recognized that "giving others help and getting help can be a rewarding experience." Some realized that Simon's new perspective was revealed by his underlying emotion when he thought, "There flies my falcon." Some students associated the altruism of a "Good Samaritan" with religion, and other students expressed the idea more generally—"We all initially want some kind of physical reward when the mental reward is just as good." Many students noted that "We should expect back from people what we dish out" and "What goes around comes around."

A few students took an opposing view, suggesting that "We help others to feel that we are better," or recognizing that looking after ourselves is an appropriate value if we are to achieve to the best of our abilities. These students felt that expecting no help from others promotes a realistic, responsible, competent, or confident attitude that is associated with self-reliance and independence. (One student remarked that "If people are always helping each other, nobody will get anywhere.")

Another group of students saw the two-sided nature of the issue and said such things as "It is human to help, but it is both a gift and a curse." At times, such responses revealed insight into the complexity of the issue—"People must look after themselves but at the same time be willing to accept and give help to others. Not to do so would hamper survival of the whole."

Students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** demonstrated a defensible understanding of the reading selection. These students responded to the selection and the assignment in a conventional way. Generally, students at this level formed an opinion, commented on the reading selection, and then used personal observations and experiences to support their opinion. Some students moralized about the topic, concluding with comments such as "If you have the chance to help someone, you should be glad for the opportunity."

The organizational structure of responses at the **(3) Satisfactory** level was functional, though some were more complex than usual as some students struggled through the dual focus which resulted from Simon's change in perspective. Consequently, some introductions were longer or more complex than in the past, but once students arrived at a thesis, their development tended to be straightforward and functional.

Occasionally, students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** were able to achieve stylistic effects such as emphasis by using a well-positioned short sentence or sentence fragment, or by using rhetorical questions. While their writing did contain the occasional lapse in control of syntax and usage and the occasional error in grammar and mechanics, these students displayed general control of the basics of correct sentence construction, usage, grammar, and mechanics. Relatively few students quoted from the excerpt or assignment, with the exception of references to the statement about expecting "no help from others." Very few students padded their compositions with indiscriminate copying from the excerpt.

Students achieving **(4) Proficient**, **(4.5)**, and **(5) Excellent** understood and responded to the subtleties of the selection, and commented, for example, on Simon's thoughts, "That bird is like me," and "There flies my falcon." These students tended to be specific in their use of detail to support their opinions. They provided the reader with effectively organized responses that included introductions purposefully designed to provide direction for the reader. They were able to manipulate syntax for stylistic effect and to use figures of speech and connotations to add to their meanings. These students demonstrated competent and even confident control of Matters of Correctness.

Section II: Functional Writing

The January 1995 Functional Writing assignment required students to assume the role of the secretary of the Nalwen High School Drama Club and to write to Mr. Traco Mah, a 1990 Nalwen High School graduate who had recently produced and directed a film, inviting him to be the keynote speaker at the grand opening of the new Performing Arts Centre and to attend the performance of four prize-winning plays and other scheduled activities.

Most students understood the assignment and used an appropriately courteous tone; in some of the strongest responses, the tone was sincerely enthusiastic and persuasive.

Students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** provided just enough general information to fulfill the purpose of the letter. Many of these students congratulated Mr. Mah on his achievement as a film director. These students tended to provide appropriate closures, indicating their awareness of the need for Mr. Mah to reply to their letter. However, they did not always provide specific information, such as a telephone number, in their closings.

Many less successful students wrote brief, often confusing, responses. Some of these students tended to lose sight of their audience partway through their responses; many of these students omitted significant information and included insignificant details in an attempt to fulfill their purpose. A few students simply repeated, verbatim, the situation presented in the assignment. These students' responses were scored "insufficient."

Students achieving **(4) Proficient**, **(4.5)**, and **(5) Excellent** demonstrated a precise awareness of audience. Their letters were enhanced by the inclusion of specific details that provided Mr. Mah with complete information about his role in the opening of the new Performing Arts Centre. These students also provided interesting and persuasive details designed to convince Mr. Mah to accept their invitation.

Section III: Response to Visual Communication

The January 1995 photograph shows a raw, plucked, and eviscerated chicken hanging suspended over a pool of alligators. The alligators are attempting to leap out of the water to get at the chicken while, in the background, a group of people (young and old, male and female) watch with interest.

It is encouraging to note that most students appeared to have had little difficulty in interpreting the photograph, responding with fairly substantial compositions. Most were able to form, and support, generalizations; fewer students than in the past used the photograph as a springboard for their own narratives.

The photograph generated a variety of responses. Students who focused on the chicken hanging in the centre of the photograph tended to present generalizations about the topic of vulnerability while students who focused on the alligators presented generalizations about competition or "survival of the fittest." Students who focused on the crowd watching the alligators presented generalized ideas related to humanity's fascination with violence, to man's power over nature, or to man's cruelty to animals. Most responses were reflective of the students' sensitivity and awareness of the foibles of humanity.

Students achieving **(3) Satisfactory** tended to interpret the photograph in a conventional way, using generalized details for support. Perhaps because of the emotional impact of the photograph, some students did not refer specifically to the photographer's choices. Some students, however, commented upon choices such as the blurred background, the camera angle, and the use of contrast or juxtaposition.

Students achieving **(4) Proficient**, **(4.5)**, and **(5) Excellent** provided insightful interpretations of the photograph, providing themes that generalized beyond the photograph to some aspect of the human condition. These students explained how the details in the photograph and the photographer's choices (the use of centring, balance, texture, plane of focus, and symbolism) reinforced their interpretations.

Question-by-Question Results

Part B: Reading

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	A	62.5
2	A	61.3
3	B	56.0
4	D	75.7
5	B	45.7
6	C	84.7
7	A	77.9
8	A	63.5
9	D	71.9
10	D	54.5
11	B	73.7
12	D	55.6
13	C	62.3
14	C	53.5
15	A	71.2
16	D	78.8
17	A	58.1
18	B	49.9
19	A	34.7
20	A	54.6
21	A	63.7
22	D	60.8
23	D	46.5
24	D	76.2
25	B	64.3
26	B	61.0
27	A	75.0
28	B	70.4
29	C	58.5
30	B	56.3
31	C	37.4
32	B	39.6
33	B	81.9
34	A	67.3
35	C	83.9
36	B	52.6
37	A	79.6
38	A	68.6
39	C	51.7
40	C	75.5
41	D	67.3
42	B	37.7
43	D	41.1
44	D	67.3
45	A	46.9
46	C	65.8
47	D	65.0
48	D	85.5
49	C	72.5
50	C	83.3
51	B	65.2
52	B	39.5
53	C	50.7
54	A	75.9
55	D	75.1
56	C	45.7
57	D	68.4
58	B	83.3
59	C	64.2
60	C	44.2
61	A	55.4
62	B	69.0
63	C	55.6
64	C	70.0
65	D	78.6
66	D	71.1
67	B	60.2
68	A	70.3
69	C	58.6
70	A	74.9

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each correct alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results to provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examination Blueprint

Part B: Reading has a value of 70 marks, one for each multiple-choice question. Each question is classified in two ways: according to the curricular content being tested and according to the thinking (process) skill demanded by the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in January 1995 according to these classifications.

Classification by Course Content	Classification by Thinking Skills			Total
	Literal Understanding	Inference and Application	Evaluation	
Main Ideas/Details	2, 34, 37	1, 4, 12, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 39, 40, 41, 42, 51, 52, 55, 57, 61, 65, 70	6, 9, 11, 16, 35, 43	28 Items (20%)
Relationship between Form and Content		3, 8, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 53, 54, 56, 58, 69	10, 63	19 Items (14%)
Human Experience and Values		13, 33, 36, 59, 62, 64, 67	5, 7, 14, 15, 18, 32, 60, 66, 68	16 Items (11%)
Knowledge of Revision and Editing	48, 49, 50	44, 45, 46, 47		7 Items (5%)
Total	6 Items (4%)	47 Items (34%)	17 Items (12%)	70 Items (50%)

Subtest Results*

Results are in average raw scores.

Total Part B: 44.3 out of 70

Course Content

- Main Ideas/Details: 18.2 out of 28
- Relationship between Form and Content: 11.3 out of 19
- Human Experience and Values: 9.8 out of 16
- Knowledge of Revision and Editing: 4.9 out of 7

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school subtest results.

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

Standards

During the marking session, a committee of five English 33 teachers reviewed Part B to determine whether the standards embedded in the readings and questions were appropriate and fair, relative to curricular and public expectations. The committee members generally concurred that the examination set an appropriate standard of achievement for graduating English 33 students. Generally, they found the reading selections to be relevant, challenging, and engaging, and the questions to be appropriate and fair. These teachers believed that the excerpt from "Business as Usual" and the short story, "The Stolen Party," were particularly appropriate for English 33.

Detailed Discussion

The following table gives results for six multiple-choice questions. These six questions were chosen to represent the range of difficulty (34.7 to 85.5) present in Part B. These six questions also represent all of the question types that appear in the blueprint on page 5. Questions 19 and 60 should be of particular interest for teachers since the teachers who reviewed Part B for standards asked that these two questions be included in the discussion.

For each question, statistics are given for three student groups. The comments following the table discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Student Group	Question Number					
	19	20	48	60	65	67
All Students	34.7	54.6	85.5	44.2	78.6	60.2
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	44.5	84.3	98.7	59.0	97.8	93.4
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	33.4	47.0	82.8	38.8	75.5	51.3

Questions 19 and 20 were two of a set of seven questions on the poem "Translations," by Margaret H. Carson.

19. As it relates to the poem, the title suggests that the woman
- A. actively gives personal meaning to her perceptions
 - B. occasionally depends upon others to structure her existence
 - C. diminishes her present circumstances when she attempts to live in the past
 - D. observes many similarities in the experiences of her childhood and her old age

Question 19 was classified under Reporting Category 1 of the English 33 Diploma Examination blueprint for Part B, *Main Ideas/Details*. Question 19 was the most difficult question on Part B, with only 34.7% of the students answering correctly. Even the students who achieved the standard of excellence on the examination found this to be a difficult question, with only 44.5% of them answering correctly, while 39.7% of these students incorrectly chose C as the answer, and 15.3% incorrectly chose D. Only 24.7% of the students who failed the examination answered correctly; many more, 39.1%, incorrectly chose D.

Students may have found question 19 to be difficult because they did not focus carefully enough on the words "the title" in the question's stem. The title of the poem, "Translations," suggests that the woman in the poem is engaged in an act of mental transformation or of interpretation, a conscious act of changing one thing (in this case, the noises she hears in her present) into another (the sounds she remembers from her past).

20. A shift from the woman's present situation to her past remembrances is signalled by the word

- A. "but" (line 5)
 - B. "at" (line 7)
 - C. "between" (line 12)
 - D. "She" (line 19)
-

Question 20 was classified under Reporting Category 2, *Relationship between Form and Content*. This question tested the ability of students to determine where, in the structure of the poem, a shift in time is indicated.

Question 20 was challenging, with only 54.6% of the students answering correctly. However, this question discriminated highly between students doing well on the examination and those doing less well. Students who achieved the standard of excellence found this to be a relatively easy question, since 84.3% of them answered correctly; students who received marks on the examination between 50% and 64% found this to be a difficult question—only 47.0% of them answered correctly. Students who failed the examination appear to have guessed at the question—30.8% of them answered correctly, 26.4% chose B, 22.5% chose C, and 20.3% chose D.

48. Homonyms are words that have the same pronunciation but different spellings and meanings. A misused homonym that Robin fails to correct is

- A. great (paragraph 1, second sentence)
 - B. waste (paragraph 2, last sentence)
 - C. break (paragraph 3, fourth sentence)
 - D. there (paragraph 4, last sentence)
-

Question 48 was one of a set of seven questions which was designed to test students' knowledge of revision and editing. These questions were classified under Reporting Category 4, *Knowledge of Revision and Editing*. In answering questions such as this, students are required to make decisions about appropriate revisions to a piece of writing.

Question 48 was the easiest question in the set of seven. In fact, it was the easiest question on Part B, with 85.5% of the students answering correctly. Even 59.3% of the students who failed the examination managed to answer question 48 correctly.

While it is encouraging to see that so many students can recognize an incorrectly used homonym and select it from a list of four, it is discouraging that a great many students do not appear to proofread their work on Part A of the examination to catch and correct similar errors.

Questions 60, 65, and 67 were three of a set of twelve questions on the short story "The Stolen Party," by Liliانا Heker.

60. Rosaura's mother **most likely** starches Rosaura's Christmas dress and rinses her hair with apple vinegar because Rosaura's mother

- A. has faith that beauty can overcome class struggles
 - B. has learned that such preparations are expected by her employer
 - C. hopes that these measures will protect Rosaura from disappointment
 - D. fears that her daughter's physical appearance may be inappropriate
-

Question 60 was classified under Reporting Category 3, *Human Experience and Values*. Questions of this type require students to identify or infer a writer's attitudes and values and/or the attitudes, values, and motivations of characters in literature.

Question 60, an evaluation question, required students to use their powers of judgement to select the best answer from four alternatives, all of which contained an aspect of plausibility or an element of correctness. Seventeen of the 70 questions on Part B were of this sort. (See the blueprint on page 5.)

Like question 19, question 60 was challenging, with only 44.2% of the students choosing the keyed response, C. However, this question discriminated rather well—59.0% of the students achieving the standard of excellence on the examination chose the keyed response, compared with 32.7% of the students who failed the examination.

65. Rosaura realizes the truth of her position at the party when
- A. she is chosen to help the magician
 - B. she is questioned by Luciana's cousin
 - C. Senora Ines asks Rosaura to pass the cake
 - D. Senora Ines attempts to pay Rosaura for her help

Question 65 was classified under Reporting Category 1, *Main Ideas/Details*. This question asked students to recognize an important event or detail from the short story, one that emphasizes the story's theme and acts, essentially, as the story's climax.

This question was the most highly discriminating question on Part B, yet it was relatively easy, especially for the students achieving the standard of excellence on the examination. The only students who had difficulty with it were the students who failed the examination—only 41.0% of these students answered correctly, 20.0% incorrectly chose A, 17.8% chose B, and 20.4% chose C.

67. When Senora Ines says "You really and truly earned this" (line 121), she shows that she is
- A. genuinely caring but overbearing
 - B. well meaning but insensitive
 - C. insincerely grateful
 - D. intentionally cruel

Question 67 was classified under Reporting Category 3, *Human Experience and Values*. It asked students to infer the character traits of Senora Ines, one of the story's main characters, from what she says to Rosaura, the story's protagonist. Senora Ines is not genuinely caring, even though she is polite to Rosaura. She is not overbearing; in fact, her manner appears to be quite pleasant. She is not insincere; she is genuinely grateful to Rosaura for her "help." And she is not *intentionally* cruel, although her actions most certainly have the effect, on Rosaura, of being cruel. Senora Ines is well meaning; she believes that by paying Rosaura for her assistance, she is doing the right thing. Unfortunately, Senora Ines is so caught up in the *status quo* that she cannot recognize what the magician has already recognized about Rosaura. Rosaura is not just "the maid's daughter," she is a true "princess," as defined by her intelligence, her proficiency, and her ambition. Senora Ines is insensitive to all of this until her moment of paralysis, at the end of the story.

Question 67 was of average difficulty, with 60.2% of the students answering correctly. It was also another highly discriminating question: correct answers were provided by 93.4% of the students who achieved the standard of excellence, 79.2% of the students whose marks were between 65% and 79%, 51.3% of the students whose marks were between 50% and 64%, and only 25.1% of the students who failed the examination.

Comparison of Students' Results on Parts A and B

While it is not intended that Parts A and B of the English 33 Diploma Examination be considered to be separate exams, it is interesting to compare the distribution of scores on the two parts of the examination.

	Part A	Part B
A	4.2%	14.3%
B	25.8%	34.5%
C	58.3%	32.5%
F	11.7%	18.7%

In January 1995, considerably more students were awarded scores in the "A" and "F" categories on Part B of the examination than on Part A. The scarcity of scores of 80% and above on Part A does not signal a new phenomenon; in the past, few students have scored at this level on Part A.

For further information, contact Tom Dunn, Gloria Malick, or Elana Scaba at the Student Evaluation Branch, 403-427-0010.